(c) whether this aspect has been drawn to the attention of the NHAI;

(d) whether any particular steps have been taken by the NHAI on National Highway 5 to address the concerns raised by social activists;

(e) whether it is a fact that immediate response is not being given; and

(f) if so, the reasons for this lethargic attitude?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) The National Highways Authority of India is in the process of development of various sections of the National Highways Development Project including National Highway No. 5. The Authority has taken up the work of project preparation before the actual execution of various projects. Requisite safety aspects including safety design are considered at the project preparation stage. Once projects based on these project reports are executed, road accidents are expected to reduce considerably.

Losses suffered due to Port Workers Strike

572. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the total estimated loss due to the recent port workers' strike;

(b) the steps being taken to prevent such strikes to save huge loss occurring due to these strikes;

(c) the time frame by which striking workers' demands are to be implemented; and

(d) whether Government are planning to prevent these type of strikes in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) During

January; 2000, against the target of 22.736 Million Tonnes the Major Ports handled 21.116 Million Tonnes. The shortfall in target is expected to be made good in the balance period of current financial year. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the loss due to the strike.

(b) and (d) Despite best efforts by the Government to resolve various issues with labour federations amicably, the federations sometimes go on strike. All efforts are made to avert strikes by involving Regional Labour Commissioner for conciliation.

(c) During the discussions held with the federation leaders, a number of decisions were taken. The demands for the period of settlement, and applying new House Rent Allowance rates retrospectively *i.e.* from 1.1.1998, are to be considered by Government and efforts would be made to resolve these issues by 31.3.2000. As regards other issues raised by the 5 federations, these are being discussed at the level of Bipartite Wage Negotiations Committee.

Funds for Widening of NHs

573. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 757 given in Rajya Sabha on 7th December, 1999 and state:

(a) the names of the National Highways widened to two lanes in phased manner;

(b) whether the inter-se-priority has since been drawn and the estimated cost for this purpose in each case has since been worked out; and

(c) by which time the funds will be made available in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Out of an aggregate length of 1324 Kms. of National Highways, National Highway Nos. lA, 20, 21 and 22 have already been widened to two lanes in an aggregate length of about 336 Kms.

(b) and (c) The inter-se-priority and the estimated cost are determined/drawn on year to year basis and accordingly works are